

Munchausen's syndrome and Homoeopathy

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Definition

Munchausen's syndrome is a psychological disorder where someone pretends to be ill (Psora) or deliberately produces symptoms of illness in themselves with a goal to have people care for them and be the center of attention, but not for any practical benefit (Psora/ Syphilis). A person with Munchausen syndrome can be very convincing, which results in doctors providing unnecessary treatment including surgery (Psora/ Syphilis).



Etymology

Named after German aristocrat, Baron Munchausen, famous for telling wild, unbelievable tales about his exploits.

Signs and Symptoms

These may include pretending to be ill or self-harming to aggravate or induce illness (Psora/ Syphilis). A person with Munchausen syndrome gains strong gratification from the attention associated with playing the ill patient or victim (Psora), main signs and symptoms being-

- An enormous medical history with a large number of tests, medical procedures and operations (Psora)
- Appeals for invasive medical procedures or surgeries (Psora/ Syphilis)
- Extensive medical knowledge of many different diseases (Psora)
- Failure to improve despite medical treatment, including relapses for unknown reasons (Psora)
- Frequent presentation at emergency departments, usually at different hospitals (Psora)
- New symptoms that appear after medical tests prove negative (Psora)
- No conclusive results despite intense medical investigations (Psora)
- Strange collection of apparently unconnected symptoms (Psora)
- Visiting many different doctors, sometimes far away (Psora)



Types

Munchausen's syndrome presents in a number of ways-

Psychological actions

Claiming to hear voices or claiming to see things that are not really there. (Psora)

Physical actions

Claiming to have chest pain or a stomachache etc. (Psora)

Active performance

Such as deliberately infecting a wound by rubbing dirt into it. (Psora/ Syphilis)

People with Munchausen's syndrome can be very manipulative and, in the most serious cases, may undergo painful and sometimes life-threatening surgery, even though they know it is unnecessary. (Psora/ Syphilis)

Munchausen syndrome by proxy

Munchausen syndrome by proxy (MBP) was the term previously used for a rare but serious form of abuse where the person either fakes or produces symptoms in someone else, usually their child. Typically, the care taker deliberately poisons or harms the child to procure unnecessary tests and medical procedures. The most common form of abuse appears to be apnoea. The child may be revived by ambulance officers and taken to hospital, where all tests prove negative. Sometimes the child does not survive the carer-induced apnoea.

Causes

Based on the available research and case studies, several factors have been found behind Munchausen's syndrome-

Childhood trauma

It may be caused by parental neglect and abandonment, or other childhood trauma (Causa occasionalis). This causes him to have unresolved issues with their parents that cause them to fake illness (Psora/ Syphilis). They may do this because they-

- Have a compulsion to punish themselves by making themselves ill because they feel them worthless (Syphilis)
- Need to feel important and be the center of attention (Psora)
- Need to pass responsibility for their wellbeing and care on to other people (Psora)

This may be because they link their childhood memories with a sense of being cared for (Psora). As they get older, they try to obtain the same feelings of reassurance by pretending to be ill. (Psora/ Syphilis)

Personality disorders

Some examples of the different personality disorders may be linked with Munchausen's syndrome-

Antisocial personality disorder

A person may take pleasure in manipulating and deceiving doctors, giving them a sense of power and control. (Psora)

Borderline personality disorder

Where a person struggles to control their feelings and often swings between positive and negative views of others. (Psora)

Narcissistic personality disorder

Where a person often swings between seeing themselves as special and fearing they are worthless. Playing the sick role allows them to adopt an identity that brings unconditional support and acceptance from others with it. Admission to hospital also gives the person a clearly defined place in a social network. (Psora/ Syphilis)

Risk factors

These may be-

- Chronic illness during childhood – the person may have received a lot of attention because of their illness (Causa occasionalis)
- Chronic illness of a significant family member when the person was a child
- Self-esteem or identity problems (Psora)
- Relationship problems (Psora)
- Difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy (Psora)
- Ability to lie and manipulate (Psora)
- A history of mental problems such as depression, hallucinations or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Psora/ Syphilis)
- The need to blame personal failures on external factors, such as illness (Syphilis)

Pathophysiology

A person with Munchausen syndrome may try to convince doctors in many ways-

- Pretend have pain (Psora)
- Exaggerate symptoms (Psora)
- Fake symptoms, including psychological symptoms (Psora)
- Poison themselves with chemicals (Syphilis)
- Infect themselves with unclean substances (Syphilis)
- Tamper with diagnostic tests e.g. contaminate a urine sample with sugar or blood (Psora)
- Interfere with a medical condition so that recovery is not possible e.g. repeatedly open or contaminate a skin wound or not take prescribed medication (Psora)
- Ignore a genuine medical problem until it becomes serious (Psora)

There are four main ways people with Munchausen's syndrome fake or induce illnesses-

Lying about symptoms

Like- choosing symptoms that are difficult to disprove, such as having a severe headache or pretending to have a seizure or to pass out etc.

Tampering with test results

Like- heating a thermometer to suggest a fever or adding blood to a urine sample etc.(Psora)

Self-infliction

Like- cutting or burning themselves, poisoning themselves with drugs, or eating food contaminated with bacteria etc. (Psora/ Syphilis)

Aggravating pre-existing conditions

Like- rubbing faeces into wounds to cause an infection, or reopening previously healed wounds etc. (Psora/ Syphilis)

Diagnosis

It is very difficult to diagnose the patients with Munchausen's syndrome as they are very convincing and skilled at manipulating and exploiting a doctor's concern for their patients, and their natural interest in investigating unusual medical conditions.

The person's health records of the suspect must be checked for discrepancies between their claimed and actual medical history. The attendant may help in finding actual problems. Evidence of self-inflicted illness or tampering with clinical tests must be analyzed. Moto behind their behavior must be investigated, such as faking illness for financial gain or because they want access to strong painkillers. Munchausen's syndrome is confirmed by-

- Strong signs of fabricating or inducing symptoms
- Prime motivation to be seen as sick
- No other likely reason or explanation for their behavior

Differential diagnosis

Hypochondriasis

Hypochondriasis or health anxiety is a psychiatric disorder where a person has a fear of illness and interprets normal bodily functions, such as sweating, or minor abnormalities, such as aches and pains, as signs of major illness.

Malingering

Malingering is feigning or faking illness intended to gain a material benefit, such as avoiding a duty or obtaining compensation.

Treatment

Main aim is to find out the exact motive behind the syndrome. A proper counselling is needed. If repeated sessions of psychological counselling are uneventful, Homoeopathic treatment is needed.

Homoeopathic remedies for Munchausen's syndrome

acer-circ. acon. aethyl-act. aethyl. agar. **Agath-a.** aids. aloe alum. anac. androc. **Ant-c.** ara-maca. arg-n. ars. asaf. **Aur-m-n.** **Aur-m.** aur. bar-c. **BELL.** **Bism.** borx. bry. calc-p. calc-sil. **CALC.** calen. camph. cann-i. carb-an. carb-v. **Carc.** **Caust.** cham. chin. choc. coff. colum-p. con. **Croc.** cupr. cypra-eg. diph. dulc. falco-pe. **Flav.** **Gels.** germ-met. graph. **HAM.** **Hell.** hura hydr. **HYOS.** **Ign.** iod. iodof. irid-met. kali-c. kali-p. **Kali-s.** kola lac-ac. lac-c. lac-del. **Lach.** lec. lil-t. limen-b-c. lyc. marb-w. melal-alt. mosch. musca-d. nat-c. **Nat-m.** nat-s. nat-sil. nit-ac. **Nux-m.** **Nux-v.** ol-eur. **Olib-sac.** op. ox-ac. ozone par. petr-ra. ph-ac. **Phos.** pin-con. plat. plb. **Podo.** polys. positr. prot. **PULS.** rhus-g. rhus-t. ruta sabad. sacch. sal-fr. **Sang.** seneg. **Sep.** **SIL.** **Spong.** **Staph.** **Stram.** sul-ac. **Sulph.** symph. syph. **Tarent.** thea **Tritic-vg.** **Tung-met.** ulm-c. valer. **Vanil.** verat. vero-o.

Short Repertory of Munchausen's syndrome

MIND - ABRUPT - affectionate; rough yet **Aur-m.** lyc. nat-m. nux-v. podo. **PULS.**

MIND - AFFECTION - yearning for affection **carc.** ol-eur. olib-sac. phos.

MIND – AFFECTIONATE **acon.** agar. **Agath-a.** aloe alum. anac. **Ant-c.** ars. **Aur-m-n.** aur. bar-c. **BELL.** borx. bry. calc-p. **Calc.** carb-an. carb-v. **carc.** **Caust.** cham. chin. choc. coff. colum-p. **Croc.** dulc. **Flav.** graph. **HAM.** hura hydr. **HYOS.** **Ign.** irid-met. **Kali-s.** kola lac-ac. lac-del. **lach.** lec. lil-t. limen-b-c. lyc. nat-c. **Nat-m.** nat-s. nat-sil. nit-ac. **Nux-v.** **Olib-sac.** op. ox-ac. par. ph-ac. **Phos.** plat. podo. positr. **PULS.** rhus-t. seneg. sep. **Sil.** **Staph.** **stram.** **Sulph.** symph. thea **Tung-met.** ulm-c. valer. vanil. verat. vero-o.

MIND - BLINDNESS; pretending **verat.**

MIND - CARESSED; being - desire to be caressed - children; in **puls.** **sacch.**

MIND - CARESSED; being - desire to be caressed **ara-maca.** **cann-i.** **carc.** **cypra-eg.** **marb-w.** **ol-eur.** **olib-sac.** **Podo.** **sacch.** **Tritic-vg.**

MIND - COMPLAINING - injury; of imaginary **Hyos.**

MIND - CONSOLATION - amel. - woman; when consoled by a **sal-fr.**

MIND - CONSOLATION - amel. acer-circ. agar. aids. arg-n. asaf. calc-p. camph. carc. caust. con. cypra-eg. falco-pe. gels. **Hell.** kali-s. melal-alt. musca-d. **Phos.** pin-con. prot. **PULS.** ruta sal-fr. sil. spong. staph. syph. tritic-vg. vanil.

MIND - CONSOLATION - kind words; from **Carc.**

MIND - CUDDLE - desire to be cuddled **sacch.**

MIND - DEAFNESS; pretended **verat.**

MIND - FEIGNING - fainting - paroxysms; in **Tarent.**

MIND - FEIGNING – fainting **tarent.**

MIND - FEIGNING – pregnancy **verat.**

MIND - FEIGNING - sick; to be - children; in aethyl-act. arg-n. bell. ign. lac-c. lach. lyc. **Mosch.** op. plb. **Puls.** sabad. sep. sil. syph. **tarent.** **VERAT.**

MIND - FEIGNING - sick; to be - shrieking; with **ign.** **verat.**

MIND - FEIGNING - sick; to be aethyl. arg-n. bell. calc. ign. kali-c. lach. lyc. mosch. op. petr-ra. plb. **Puls.** sabad. sep. sil. syph. **Tarent.** **verat.**

MIND - HELD - desire to be held **Ars.** **Bism.** coff. diph. dulc. **Gels.** germ-met. iod. iodof. irid-met. kali-p. kola lach. **Nux-m.** **Nux-v.** phos. plb. rhus-t. sacch. **Sang.** **Sep.** **Stram.** sul-ac. sulph. vanil.

MIND - KIND people - yearning for **olib-sac.** **Vanil.**

MIND - MAGNETIZED - desire to be calc-sil. **CALC.** cupr. lac-del. **Lach.** limen-b-c. nat-c. **PHOS.** podo. polys. **SIL.** **Spong.**

MIND - PITIES herself - sick; desire to show being **tarent.**

MIND - SYMPATHY from others - desire for androc. calen. caust. cypra-eg. **Ham.** **Kali-s.** nat-m. nat-sil. ozone **PHOS.** puls. rhus-g. ruta sep. **Spong.** vanil.

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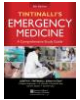
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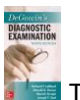
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Radar 10